661 published by the Leningrad Publishing House in 1948. On the orders of Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party Gei, "brigades" were formed in the Academy of Sciences, and they meticulously searched through publications, mimeographed speeches, and addresses for elements of National-Democracy. The prose and poetry, as well as newspaper articles, of writers and poets suspected of "Natsdemovshchina" were subjected to careful scrutiny and inspection. Besides those who were arrested, other, so-called "unexposed" National-Democrats, were smoked out. The attacks were transformed into persecution, and as a result of this badgering the famous Belorussian poet, Ianka Kupala, became desperate and attempted to kill himself after the manner of the Japanese samurais. School texts were leafed through carefully, and most of them withdrawn from circulation -- especially reading chrestomathies, grammars, and collections of dictations. Some were withdrawn automatically upon the arrest of the author and independent of their content, while others were banned as being considered inappropriate to the era of collectivization in agriculture and the Five-Year Plans. In the reading
626 chrestomathies examples of private farmers either in small villages
872 or isolated homesteads were not permitted. /31/ Nor were the arithmetical problems ever taken from the life of an independent farmer. The teachers themselves had to make up problems using the kolkhoz life or cooperative trade as a base. Moreover, only high quality produce or well-fattened stock could appear in the problems. Similarly, with regard to cooperative trade, only examples which affirmed its superiority over private trade could be employed. Some teachers, especially in the provinces, who were not sufficiently experienced in the subtleties of this Soviet policy were not only fired from their jobs but even arrested for using the following sort of example in a dictation. "Three lean kolkhoz cows were grazing in a meadow." All these switches and changes unquestionably had their impact upon the quality of work done in the schools, but educational leaders were held less responsible for the absence of textbooks than for using ones which were "ideologically inconsistent."

Theater repertoires were also subjected to severe inspection.[1] Everything even remotely reminiscent of Belorussian nationalism
661 disappeared from the stage, the artistic value of the play notwith-
536 standing. The First Belorussian Theater was forbidden to give Na
626 Kupale, /On St. John's Eve/, a marvellous fairy-tale based on the national folk legend of the search for the "flower of luck" on the

[1] [After 1930, cf. pp. 32-33, Century ME-And (yst]

661 night of St. John Kupala. The same happened to the historical
536 drama Kastus' Kalinovskii which portrays the heroic struggle of
626 the Belorussians in 1863 under Kastus' Kalinovskii's leadership. It was not saved by the circumstance that Kalinovskii was hung in Wilno by Murav'ev, the man who subdued the rebellion. 'Masheka', a play based on the legend of the founding of Mogilev, was also taken off the stage.

661 They even turned their attentions to the travel ing theater
545 which was under the direction of the national artist, Vladislav
626 Golubok. Instead of dramas based on the national life which could thus be understood by the broad masses of peasants and workers, the theater was reduced to giving strange and unintelligible translations. The travel ing company's repertoires was taken under strict surveillance as were those of the national music and singing ensembles. The director of the subdivision of Narkompros devoted to art, Il'ia Gurskii, displayed particular watchfulness in this respect. He could discover "Natsdemovshchina" not only in plays but even in the players' costumes. The artists of the Belorussian National Ensemble of music and song usually appeared on the stage in folk costumes: white trousers and folk blouses embroidered with Belorussian motifs. Gurskii ordered the white trousers to be replaced by black ones and the blouses by another kind which by its style was closer to a jacket, only without Belorussian ornamentation. The busts of the national poets, Ianka Kupala and Iakub Kolos, were removed from the pedestal of the First Belorussian Theater. /32/

523 A manifestation of chauvinism was uncovered even in the
626 Jewish national work. Jewish cultural workers, especially those
536 from other parties -- Social-Democrats (Mensheviks), former
661 Zionists, Bundists, Poal'-Zionists /?/-- were taken under strict supervision. In the Jewish theater the play, Girsh Lekert, was enjoying a great success. It portrays the revolutionary struggle of the Jewish workers in Wilno in 1902. In the course of the play the main character, a worker named Girsh Lekert, makes an attempt on the life of the Governor-General of Wilno, von Wal'. This is a historical fact. In addition to this play, the memory of Girsh Lekert had also been commemorated by placing suitable inscriptions upon the pedestal of a monument to Tsar Alexander II, the bust was broken off after the revolution. In the search for manifestations of national chauvinism it was decided that Girsh Lekert belonged to

* [official propaganda which portrayed the Belorussian national movement as counter-revolutionary, cf. pp. 32-33, category IIC - Analyst]

563 826 536 661 665 the Bund Party, and from this the conclusion was drawn that the Jewish chauvinists were idealizing a chauvinistic party and its members. This was enough to have the play immediately removed from the stage. It was also necessary to destroy the inscriptions on the monument (1). The Bolsheviks cannot bear the popularity of any

1. The monument to Girsh Lekert was placed on the site of the one to Alexander II in Minsk in 1922 (cf. Malaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopedia) /Little Soviet Encyclopedia/ Vol.IV, 1929 Edition, page 554, and also 1937 Edition, Vol. VI, page 139) and "liquidated" during the Ezhovshchina. Such was also the fate of one of the Minsk streets which in 1922 had been renamed Lekert Street and during the Ezhovshchina was re-renamed Voyoshilov Street.

other Party or its members, even though such popularity actually might be in accordance with historical reality. In this connection still another example is characteristic. The State Publishing House issued a series of biographies in the series called Zhizn' Zamechatel'nykh Liudei. /Lives of Outstanding People/. One of the books was about the life and activity of the famous volunteer Zheliabov. The book had been in circulation for quite a long time when criticism of it appeared in the Soviet press, as a result of which the book was withdrawn. The reason given was that the person of Zheliabov as a national worker was idealized -- this in spite of the fact that Lenin, even though not agreeing with the Narodnovolets tactics, called the movement a "heroic epoch". The real reason lies in the fact that Zheliabov admitted individual terror and advocated personal selflessness which are both very appealing to youth. /33/ The Bolshevik program repudiates individual terror, even though surreptitiously they practice it very widely. They are afraid to infect Soviet youth with the Narodnovolets' ideas about selflessness and thus turn it against themselves.

186 661 The Belorussians were always very proud of their great ancestor -- the scholar from Polotsk, a Doctor of Philosophy, and the first man in Belrussia to have a book published -- F. Skarina. In 1512, this great man received the degree of Doctor in medicine at the University of Padua. In one of the museum halls of the University there is even now a full-length portrait of Doctor Skarina among the other University celebrites. Until 1930 a lot of work and research

661 Everything which had been created during long years of active research in history, ethnography, geography, literature, art, and regional studies; the productions of gifted poets both young and old; and the research work of specialists were all heaped together as harmful National-Democratic rubbish once their authors had been arrested. Every Soviet citizen, especially those who had any connection with a book, could consider himself a candidate for arrest. Every intellectual was particularly diligent to destroy in time any books, newspapers, photographs, or pictures of those who had been arrested in order to avoid extra unpleasantness in the case he might have the bad luck to be arrested himself. Usually arrest was accompanied by a thorough search with confiscation of all photographs, even of people long since dead or of those who had no connection with the arrested person; private correspondence was taken as well as books and documents of authors who had already been imprisoned. All this was later analyzed and sorted out by the G. P. U. in its search for accusatory material. In this fashion valuable books, photographs of friends and relatives possessing great sentimental value, and family correspondence perished and are perishing in flames. People preferred to burn everything suspicious so as not to give the G. P. U. investigators the opportunity to dig around in it with their filthy hands or to ridicule a person's most sacred feelings during cross-examination.

626 661 Here is a short list of those works destroyed which are of general significance: 1) anthologies of Belorussian national art, 2) dialectal dictionaries of the Cherven', Mozyr', and Vitebsk areas, 3) four-hundred year old Belorussian printed matter, 4) the Belorusskii Arkhiv (a periodical). 5) all anthologies of the poet, Ales' Garun (who died in emigration), 6) the publications of the first congress of Belorussian archeologists and archeographers, 7) the publications of the Department of Humanistic Sciences of the Belorussian Academy of Sciences (comprising philology, history, ethnography, archeology, art, law), 8) the series of editions of Belorussian scientific terms, 9) material for the study of Belorussian scientific terminology, 10) Belorussian folk-tales, proverbs, and sayings, written down and arranged by A. Serzhputovskii. This is only an insignificant part of the colossal vandalism.

Out of fear even Soviet books were no longer displayed or advertised in the bookstores . . . All the propaganda posters with Soviet decorations which had been hung in public places disappeared.

626 661 Some particularly timid institutional directors hastened to repaint their offices so as to cover the Belorussian ornamentation. /35/

It cannot be asserted that this "purge" of everything national in Belorussia, which so often led to absurdities, was carried out as a result of special directives. It was just that the new leaders, particularly those who were above suspicion with regard to the national work, hastened to insure themselves against any unexpected troubles.

626 217 There was total havoc in the Belorussian State Museum. Everything was radically rearranged, there were changes in the plans of the work, and all the museum's activity was subjected to merciless criticism. The brigade of the Department of Marxist-Leninism of the Belorussian Academy of Sciences, comprising L. Bobrovich, I. Shpilevskii, M. Grinblat, A. Levdanskii, in its "exposure" Etnografiia muzeinoe delo /Ethnography in the Museums/ wrote, "The National-Democrats chose ethnography as one of their basic objectives. Ethnography gives wide scope to the primary aims of the Nats-Dems . . . The ethnographic interest of the National-Democratic scholars was an adjunct to their politics." (page 151). The very purposes of museums were revised -- mass-cultural work among the broad masses of laborers was demanded from them, on socialist construction and class warfare. "First of all it is interesting to note how the Belorussian National-Democrats approach the role of a museum as such. The principle task of a museum is to collect, safeguard, and study objects of archeological, historical, ethnographic, and artistic interest which pertain to Belorussia (Kharlampovich-- Piatigodie Belorusskogo Gosudarstvennogo Muzeia /The Fifth Anniversary of the Belorussian State Museum"/ Nash Krai /Our Country/, No. 1, 1927, page 10). This is an old bourgeois proposition. Is a museum only a collection of interesting things? Is it only a curio cabinet? Is there not even any difference between a Soviet museum and the reactionary ones developed by students of local lore in the good old days?" (page 204), proclaimed the brigade of the Academy of Sciences. Museums were particularly blamed for not carrying on anti-religious activity but on the contrary collecting everything of value from the Catholic and Orthodox churches and the synogogues and preserving it lovingly. As a result of this reproof the museums changed completely. Everything reminiscent of the national essence of Belorussia vanished from the displays.

661 The Belorussian national movement was also charged with aiming to preserve religious feelings among the population and with

665 absurd, and the victim would not confess to the investigator. So he
661 began to try to assure her that her "confession" was needed by the Party. In her simplicity Novikov stated quite reasonably that he, the investigator, was also a member of the Party and if the Party needed someone to admit to a charge of espionage, here he was presented with the opportunity. By a lucky chance Novikov succeeded in being released; a good friend of hers who was acquainted with an influential N.K.V.D. agent helped her. Novikov herself used to tell about this.

They arrested one member of the Komsomol. He was assigned the role of having spied for Italy. Knowing himself to be absolutely innocent, he stubbornly refused to confess. The investigator beat him terribly, put him in a cell, put him on the assembly line -- the fellow was unable to stand up under these methods and was ready to confess. The other prisoners in the cell took pity on the innocent youth, but of course they were unable to assist him. The Komsomel member, by the way, was a student in a school of design. There was one sharp-witted person in the cell, and he taught the Komsomol member how to "confess." At the regular examination he confessed that his contacts during his espionage activities had been the Italians Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and others. The investigator was overjoyed by the admission, having gotten what he wanted and complied with the wishes of his "superior." He fed the Komsomol member, gave him some makhorka, and sent him back to the cell. There he sat for about two more weeks, thanking his preceptor for the successful method of confession. /61/ He was called in again for examination. The elder investigator swore at him for turning the investigation into a farce, but the young man explained that his teachers had certainly been famous Italians. The ignoramus investigator had not had a notion who these world-renowned men were and believed that Raphael was an organizer of spy rings.

● 626 During the Ezhovshchina the Belorussian Communist press
661 played an especially repulsive role. The so-called newspaper correspondents scoured the various Soviet agencies and institutions for accusatory material. In this work assistance was given by the directors of the secret departments of commissariats and other important establishments. These departments were called "special sections," and in most cases were under the supervision of the secretaries of the Communist cells. When some sort of evidence, no matter

how flimsy, had been collected, the newspaper, and particularly the Communist Party organ, Zyezda would concoct an accusatory article in which no colors were spared in inventing ways to vilify the appointed victim. The facts were distorted and in most cases hollow, false, and obviously invented. At best anything positive was passed over in silence or it was presented as counter-revolutionary activity, as the intrigues of enemies of the people... After such a preparation the victim would disappear on the same day into the cellars of the N. K V. V. The existing prisons were not sufficient to hold all the prisoners, and old cellars and half-ruined storehouses had to be used; in Minsk, for example, a former monastery was adapted to serve this need. Arrests were made not only by the N. K. V. D., but also by the organs of the Soviet militia, under the pretence that it was for statutory offenses, and afterwards they were handed over according to special categories.

Citizen S. was arrested just because of this sort of accusatory and lying newspaper article in Zyezda. The police arrested him on some made-up statutory offense. While he was in police custody his wife with great difficulty succeeded in getting a chance to see him during his walk. He had not been accused of anything and had not even been examined. After three months he was handed over to the N. D. V. D. All attempts by his wife to ascertain his subsequent fate were unsuccessful. A year and a half after his arrest an N. K. V. D. agent appeared with a letter from her husband. He would not give her the letter but read it aloud instead. She maintained that the letter really looked as though written and signed by her husband. In it he begged her to send him a little fat and some warm clothing. The letter was taken back; his wife, however, was reassured by the agent who had told her that her husband's conduct was good and that he would be released within a month. The poor woman collected everything she had to make up a package /62/ to send the prisoner a little fat and some dried crusts. They took the package, and the woman sat up every night until morning waiting for her husband's return since there were rumors that prisoners were released from prison only after midnight. Eventually on one of these nights they came and carried off the woman herself, confiscating all her property and placing the apartment at the disposal of the N. K. V. D. Two homeless children remained, one twelve years old and the other four or five.